

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

First off let me state that I am not a "consumer". How can someone "consume" electronics, computers, removable media, or digital/analog content?? Will these censorship methods prevent anyone from using the technology? No. People will still be able to watch the brightly lit colors on their sets and PCs. Does a content owner have the right to protect their material? Absolutely. Will the American public put up with Hollywood's ever increasing bullying tactics? No. People and organizations who behave as Hollywood or the music industry does will soon find out they are not as important as they assume they are when the American public ignores them and does not buy their losey products.

Is digital media truly that important that everyone must be censored? No it is not. Will I buy into digital video? No, I will not. Why not? Analog suits my needs for video just fine. Merely being digitized or digital does not mean it is instantly superior. My analog sets cannot decipher digital without another "set-top" device which I view as a waste of money. I switched from cable to satellite because cable was so poor, now though a storm can knock out the satellite as easily as it did the cable and the compression is so high on many channels that pixelation is common. Digital isn't better for the sake of being digital.

The standards for these things is far from set in stone and I will not be part of another "standards war". There are already sufficient laws in place from the Copyright Act that need only be enforced for a change. There's no need to re-write everything just because a computer or computerized device allows people to make copies better and easier than ever before. It's not like computers haven't been used by millions of people over the past 15 years to use, record, copy "content" before now. These censorship tactics even threaten to make 35 million US sold DVD players inoperable if they are implemented. What do you say to all those gullable Americans when that happens??

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices? Of course it would censor people's ability to distribute the signal or recording of that signal. That is the whole point behind the broadcast flag. Time-shifting like what we do in recording to a VCR to watch at a later time will no longer be possible with new recorders that can see and obey these flags. But there lies the problem. How to make everyone in the world buy these flag enabled recorders? Any existing hardware prior to the implementation of this flag technology will be immune to them and able to record as they normally would. Why did the Laser Disc fail so miserably here in the US? People could not record to it. Better video and audio only mattered to the few people who could afford to invest in that technology. For those few, watching a 12 inch disc was fine. But for the millions of Americans with VCRs or thinking of getting something for videos the limitation of not being able to record their favorite TV shows was the key factor in their choice to skip LDs. I believe the same thing will result from "digital TV" if these flags or other censorship methods are forced upon us.

Flags can also serve as cookies. they can be used to snoop on people's use

of recorded content. If a land line connection is ever required in order to use flag recorded content then anyone on that network (legal or otherwise) can spy on people's uses of their recorders or viewers (aka set-top devices or digital sets). Plus these flags can be used to disable content at any time (even years after being recorded). There is little difference here between flags and the DIVX hardware version of DVD which also failed. With Divx DVDs you had to maintain an account to watch physically recorded DVDs that you either rented or bought. If you moved or lost the account you also lost the ability to watch any Divx DVD you owned! Flags will allow the same thing all over again.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

Yes and no. No if using existing plugs like RCAs, component, fiber optics, and the coaxial cable plug on most devices made over the past 20 odd years there is no way to physically prevent devices from serving their original purpose. The only way a set-top box or other type of converter can prevent these "legacy" devices from working is through changing how the devices plug into the TV sets or converter devices. Only by moving to a whole new plug-in technology can it limit people's ability to do what they wish with their existing analog and/or digital gear.

Yes if the set-top devices or converters that receive future digital broadcasts do not output to the current standards such as RCAs, coaxial cable plugs, or the other plugs we all use today. But that will only last as long as it takes some hobbyist to work up a bypass and then post a how-to text/graphics file on the internet showing the rest of us how to bypass the new blocks. Effectively hardware and software based censorship or "Big Brother Inside" will only spur more activity by people to circumvent the technology rather than live with it.

Educate the people with the truth about copyright law and people will come around and accept it. There will always be people who do not live within the bounds of the law.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

Yes and No. Yes if technologists are told they can only create new devices or software with the blessings of Hollywood or other such parties.

No if there are no parties or persons to report to for approval of a new device, technology, or software title is to be researched and/or released. when will America become the new dictatorship?

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

It all depends on the actual costs of the hardware to be added to everything, the new laws that must be enforced to make it effective (we've all seen how well current laws have been enforced), the new prisons to be built for those who do not fall in line and obey their new digital content masters.

Other Comments:

Digital rights and/or censorship flags/cookies only works with software and hardware that recognize it and are used to recognize it. If I opt to

disable digital rights in my software players I can still use the content however I choose. If the players later require I use digital rights I will not use those players and instead sue older players or better players that do not impose limits on my use of content. If content is so encoded that it prevents me from using it without using a digital rights (or flag) enabled device or player then I will return such media to the store (or simply not buy it). Any content that also requires me to use digital rights or flags/cookies will not reside on my computers or will not be used by my other gear. In short you may wish to force this off onto the people but we the people do not have to USE it nor do we have to BUY it.

Ask yourselves this: Is the content really that important? How good can sex, religion, sports, and bloodshed look on analog versus digital? What happens to America when more people wake up from their televised stupor and switch off their sets for good?